DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 409 145 RC 021 088

AUTHOR	Campbell, John Martin
TITLE	The Prairie Schoolhouse.
REPORT NO	ISBN-0-8263-1660-3
PUB DATE	96
NOTE	164p.; Foreword by Tony Hillerman.
AVAILABLE FROM	University of New Mexico Press, 1720 Lomas Blvd., N.E., Albuquerque, NM 87131-1591 (cloth: ISBN-0-8263-1659-X, $60; paper: ISBN-0-8263-1660-3, $29.95).
PUB TYPE	Books (010) -- Historical Materials (060)
EDRS PRICE	Document Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	Boards of Education; Educational Facilities Design; Educational History; Elementary Education; *Farmers; *Land Settlement; *One Teacher Schools; Photographs; *Rural Education; *Rural Schools; *School Buildings
IDENTIFIERS	*Homesteading; Regional History; United States (Great Plains States); United States (Northwest)

ABSTRACT

This book documents the history of the prairie schoolhouse through text and photographs. The prairie schoolhouse was a product of the Western Homestead Era, those years beginning late in the 19th century when the federally owned grass prairies east of the Rockies and the sagebrush country of the interior Northwest were opened to farming. Homesteading, the process whereby a citizen could acquire a piece of federal land, dates to a U.S. congressional act of 1862. The farmers who came to stake a claim on the prairies wanted their children to be educated. Thus, in regions of abundant homesteads, one-room schools were built every 2-4 miles, usually by the farmers themselves. A single teacher taught grades 1-8. The typical prairie schoolhouse was a simple rectangular structure with a pitched roof having a central ridge, either gabled at each end or hipped. The two major varieties of the prairie schoolhouse, the south and the north prairie styles, were determined largely by climate and the availability of construction materials. Regardless of variety, there were only minor differences in the size of the schoolroom itself and in its arrangement and furnishing. Although resources were scarce and most teachers were not educated beyond the eighth grade, prairie schoolhouses turned out hundreds of thousands of literate teenagers who became functioning members of mainstream U.S. society. The combined effects of the Great Depression and the Dust Bowl drove farmers from their land, and by the early 1950s more than 5 million prairie residents had abandoned their homesteads. Of the thousands of homestead schools that 80 years ago dotted the western prairies, nearly all have disappeared, and most of those remaining have fallen to ruin. The 60 photographs in this book document remains of prairie schoolhouses and homestead structures in Washington, Oregon, Montana, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Nebraska. Contains a bibliography. (LP)

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DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 409 146 RC 021 097

AUTHOR	Clegg, Luther Bryan, Ed.
TITLE	The Empty Schoolhouse: Memories of One-Room Texas Schools. The Centennial Series of the Association of Former Students, Texas A&M University, Number 68.
REPORT NO	ISBN-0-89096-749-0
PUB DATE	97
NOTE	244p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Texas A&M University Press, Drawer C, College Station, TX 77843-4354 ($24.95).
PUB TYPE	Books (010) -- Historical Materials (060) -- Reports - Research (143)
EDRS PRICE	Document Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	Educational History; Educational Practices; Elementary Secondary Education; Family Life; Higher Education; *One Teacher Schools; Oral History; Primary Sources; Reminiscence; Rural Education; *Rural Schools; School Community Relationship; Small Schools; *Student Experience; Teacher Education; Teacher Student Relationship; *Teaching Experience
IDENTIFIERS	*Teacher Community Relationship; *Texas (West)

ABSTRACT

This book relates the experiences of students and teachers who spent their days in one- and two-room schoolhouses in West Texas during the first half of the 20th century. The book is based on interviews with 77 people and is divided into two sections: student recollections and teachers' memories. Former students reflect on school facilities, the hardships they endured traveling to school, their relationship with teachers, school discipline policies, recess and recreation, and family life. Former teachers reminisce about their own education, teaching methods, curriculum, their relationship with students, and their status in the community. Rural schools in West Texas were controlled by trustees, and schools functioned as the center of educational, social, political, and religious activity. School sessions were often irregular and based on the availability of funds for a teacher or on the weather and farm work. Curriculum reflected the values of a rural society, with emphasis placed on reading, spelling, handwriting, and arithmetic, as well as moral upbringing. For most students and teachers, getting to school was an ordeal: many walked several miles or rode horses or mules. Frequently, teachers were boarders, sharing a room and sometimes a bed with a stranger. In addition, teachers were often expected to help the host family with cooking, child care, and household chores. The rise and fall of the rural school in West Texas reflected the rise and fall of population patterns. As people settled the area, more schools were needed. With the coming of automobiles and mechanization, small school districts were no longer necessary and the move toward consolidation began. Includes photographs, a selected bibliography, information on interviewees, and an index. (LP)